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February 2008

Dear California Child Welfare Council Member:

We are writing to express our appreciation for your service on the California Child Welfare Council (CWC). Last November, we met for the first time and had the opportunity to begin to get to know one another, to discuss priority issues for interbranch and interagency collaboration that can improve the safety, permanency and well being of children, and to begin to frame our work together as a Council.

The date of our next meeting is Tuesday, March 18, 2008, from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. in Sacramento. We will meet at the California State Association of Counties Conference Room, located at 1029 K Street. As we discussed in November, at the March meeting we will begin to develop a strategic framework that will guide, inform, and focus our work together – a framework that speaks to our vision, principles, and strategic objectives.

Originally, we set an ambitious goal of completing our work on the Council's strategic framework at the conclusion of the March meeting. Upon further reflection, and in consideration of the complexity of issues and challenges identified by Council Members, we recommend that the Council devote two full days to begin the development of a strategic framework to guide our work. We propose initiating this discussion on March 18, and continuing this important work at a second meeting, scheduled for April 14, 2008. This will enable us to receive background information on the many and varied challenges identified by our members, while also ensuring sufficient time for a thoughtful and thorough decision making process in regard to our strategic framework and the priority issues around which the CWC may initially focus its work.

You will receive an email from Karen Strickland of Golden Bear Associates in the near future with additional details in regard to these upcoming meetings and with the dates of our remaining meetings in 2008. With our March meeting just weeks away, we want to propose a set of goals for our upcoming meetings. We are hopeful that this will help frame our time together and assist each of us in preparing for an engaged discussion.

Our overall goal for the March and April Council meetings is to make substantial progress toward our joint agreement on a strategic framework. This strategic framework would set forth the Council's vision and mission statements, guiding principles, and the primary challenges that the Council will address over the next 12-24 months. Towards that end, we recommend that time be allocated to engage as a group of colleagues around the areas of interest identified by the CWC in November. We will also present draft vision/mission/guiding principles for your review. Finally, we also recommend that the Council use a portion of its meeting time in April to discuss a subcommittee structure to organize our ongoing work.

Accordingly, we propose the following issues for the March and April meetings:

1. Review our work at the November meeting on priority challenges and the results of any additional Council Member outreach activities on challenges;
2. Receive briefings on and discuss major challenges affecting child, youth and family outcomes in the child welfare system;
3. Narrow the key challenges that affect child, youth and family outcomes that require collaborative, coordinated, multi-agency strategies, and can be influenced by the work of the council.
4. Discuss a draft Council vision, mission, and guiding principles to guide our future work, as well as set of criteria to identify our initial issues of focus;
5. Determine an organizational structure to accomplish our goals and objectives given our limited resources and time together.

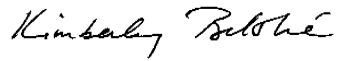
Our agenda for the March 18th and April 14th Council meetings is admittedly ambitious. However, it reflects what we heard from CWC members in November regarding the need to begin tackling high priority, interagency and interbranch challenges. Moreover, if our experience at the first meeting is any indication of the level of enthusiasm and commitment of Council Members, we feel confident that we can achieve the goals we suggest for our time together.

To support our work, please know that our respective staff and consultant teams have continued to meet regularly to develop information and materials to inform the Council's strategic framework development process.

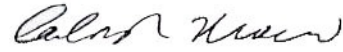
Consistent with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, we request that Council Members not discuss these issues with each other or with our staff outside the context of our public meetings. The agenda for our next meeting will be publicly posted on the Council web site and sent to all of you no later than 10 calendar days prior to the Council meeting.

Finally, we would direct your attention to the Council web page at www.chhs.ca.gov. That website contains minutes from our first meeting (noting the list of issues and challenges identified by our members at that meeting), as well as additional resources and reports identified by Council members or staff as useful background materials that can guide our work. We will continue to update this page as materials are submitted. We wish to express our appreciation to those of you who have already provided information.

The California Child Welfare Council offers an historic opportunity to tap the energy, enthusiasm and resources of over 50 dedicated individuals representing all three branches of government, multiple jurisdictions, community providers, foster youth and other key stakeholders. Thank you again for your willingness to serve on this important advisory body. We look forward to working with each of you in the coming year.



Kimberly Belshé
Secretary
California Health and Human Services Agency



Carlos R. Moreno
Associate Justice
California Supreme Court